

Message Text

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R 282223Z DEC 73
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY SAIGON
INFO ALL EAST ASIAN AND PACIFIC DIPLOMATIC POSTS
USSAGE NAKHON PHANOM
CINCPAC
AMCONSUL BIEN HOA
AMCONSUL CAN THO
AMCONSUL DANANG
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMCONSUL NHA TRANG
USDEL JEC PARIS
COGARD POLAD
XMT AMEMBASSY SUVA

UNCLAS STATE 251740

E.O. 11652 N/A
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SUBJECT: DECEMBER 28 EA PRESS SUMMARY

INDOCHINA

1. FIELD REPORTS SAY GVN BOLSTERS FORCES TO PROTECT RICE HARVEST. 1500 ADDITIONAL TROOPS WITH ARMOR SUPPORT MOVED IN TO RELIEVE ARVN BATTALION AMBUSHED ON CHRISTMAS DAY IN CHUONG THIEN PROVINCE, TOOK UP POSITIONS TO SECURE RICE HARVEST IN REGION. CLASHES WITH VC CONTINUED FOR TWO DAYS (AP SUN, NDYN, S-N 12/27; PHINQ; REUTER, NYT). COMMUNIST TERRORISTS HURL PLASTIC CHARGES INTO HOUSES
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IN VILLAGE IN QUANG NGAI PROVINCE, KILL TEN (REUTER, SUN).

2. SVN DELEGATE*TO JMC EPORTS THAT HE PROPOSED RESUMPTION OF POW EXCHANGE TO VC TO REUNITE FAMILIES FOR TET. VC

DELEGATION SPOKESMAN ACKNOWLEDGES PRO*OSAL MADE, BUT SAYS NO AGREEMENT REACHED (AP, S-N). REUTER SAIGON (WP, NYT) IN REPORT DATED DEC. 27 QUOTES GVN MILITARY SOURCES THAT DEADLOCK BROKEN ON RESUMPTION OF POW EXCHANGE BUT DETAILS REMAIN TO BE WORKED OUT; IN REPORT DATED DEC. 28, REUTER SAYS VC DENY GVN STATEMENT THAT THEY HAD AGREED TO RESUME POW EXCHANGE.

3. ISAACS (SUN) FROM HK QUOTES HANOI COMMUNIQUE, FOLLOWING VISIT OF HIGH-RANKING SOVIET DELEGATION. THAT USSR JOINS DRV IN CONDEMNING SVN FOR "GROSS AND SYSTEMATIC VIOLATIONS" OF C-F AND CHARGING THAT US HAD "ABETTED" VIOLATIONS. IN SAME COMMUNIQUE, USSR PROMISES TO CONTINUE NVN RECONSTRUCTION AID AND BACK VN "PEACEFUL REUNIFICATION", AND RECOGNIZES PRG AS "SOLE AUTHENTIC REPRESENTATIVE OF SVN PEOPLE". IN RETURN, DRV LEADERS THANK USSR FOR "GREAT, PRECIOUS, ALL-SIDED AND EFFICACIOUS SUPPORT" TO "ANTI-US STRUGGLE FOR NATIONAL SALVATION". COMMUNIQUE ALSO EXPRESSES SUPPORT FOR "LIBERATION FORCES" IN LAOS AND CAMBODIA.

4. MCCOMBS (WP) WRITES FROM VILLAGE AT EDGE OF HOBO WOODS NEAR FORMER US BASE AT CUCHI. SITUATION TENSE AND PEOPLE AFRAID AS NEARBY VC PROPAGANDIZE, DROP IN MORTAR ROUNDS AND TRY ASSASSINATE VILLAGE OFFICIAL. MANY VILLAGERS ARE REFUGEES FROM VC, BUT SEND FOOD AND OTHER SUPPLIES TO RELATIVES IN VC ZONE, SO GVN IMPOSES STRICT ECON CONTROLS. AREA CLOSE TO SAIGON AND VC MAY BE TRYING RENEW STRENGTH AND REBUILD DECIMATED INFRASTRUCTURE NEAR CAPITAL.

5. SEIDEN (SUN) WRITES FROM REFUGEE CAMP NEAR DA NANG ABOUT RETURNED POW CAM WHO FINDS LIFE IN CAMP ONLY SLIGHTLY BETTER THAN CAPTIVITY BECAUSE "THEY DON'T MIX CORN IN THE RICE". CAPTURED AFTER QUANG TRI FELL, CAM SPENT YEAR AS POW IN NVN, WAS RELEASED 7 MONTHS AGO AND LOCATED HIS FAMILY IN VAST REFUGEE CAMP. SAYS HE WAS SERGEANT UNCLASSIFIED

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WHEN CAPTURED, BUT RECORDS DESTROYED AND HE CAN'T PROVE IT, SO DRAWS ONLY PRIVATE'S PAY -- ONE FOURTH AS MUCH.

6. HEAVY FIGHTING REPORTED NEAR PP AS FANK PUSHES INTO ROCKET-LAUNCHING AREA AND TRIES TO DRIVE COMMUNISTS FROM SUPPLY ROUTES NEAR CAPITAL (AP, S-N 12/27; PHINQ). FANK RECAPTURES TWO WEST MEKONG BANK BRIDGE POSITIONS THAT WERE LOST TUESDAY. GKR EFFORTS TO REOPEN ROUTE 4 BLOCKED BY ENEMY SHELLING FROM NEARBY HILLS AP SUN, NYDN).

7. RLG SPOKESMAN SAYS SOUPHANQUVONG APPOINTED ENVOY TO NEGOTIATE ALL MATTERS IN RESPONSE TO REQUEST FROM

SOUVANNA PHOUMA. APPOINTMENT COMES AS PL ANNOUNCES "FIRM PROTEST" AGAINST ENCIRCLEMENT OF PL FORCES BY RLG TROOPS AT LUANG PRABANG (REUTER, WP).

CHINA

8. SUN'S WU SAYS CHINA'S ECONOMIC PROGRESS HAS BEEN SO GOOD THIS YEAR ITS BASE YEAR HAS BEEN CHANGED FROM 1949 TO 1965. PRC NOT APPARENTLY AFFECTED BY CURRENT OIL CRISIS, MAY HOWEVER SUFFER FROM CURTAILMENTS IN IMPORTS DUE TO WORLD ENERGY SHORTAGE. ACCORDING TO HSINHUA, POWER OUTPUT IN 1973 WAS 2.4 TIMES GREATER THAN IN 1965.

9. UPI REPORTS MOSCOW NEW TIMES ACCUSES MAOIST AGENTS OF CARRYING OUT SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES IN BURMA, MALAYSIA, PHILIPPINES AND SINGAPORE, IN EFFORT TO ESTABLISH DOMINATION OVER AREA (NYDN).

10. COMMERCE DEPARTMENT WILL OPEN US TRADE CENTER IN TAIWAN MARCH 22, 1974, TO PROMOTE SALE OF US PRODUCTS IN CHINESE MARKET. TAIWAN ADOPTED A POLICY LAST YEAR DIRECTING MANUFACTURERS AND IMPORTERS TO SEEK US SOURCES OF SUPPLY. THIS RESULTED IN A SURGE OF US EXPORTS WHICH ACCOUNTS FOR 25 PERCENT OF 2.5 BILLION DOLLARS IN TOTAL CHINESE IMPORTS THIS YEAR. CANADA CLAIMS IT EXPORTED 20.1 MILLION TO ROC ABOUT THE SAME AS LAST YEAR IN THE FIRST NINE MONTHS OF 1973, COMPARED UNCLASSIFIED

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WITH 220 MILLION DOLS EXPORTED TO PRC (JOC).

INDONESIA

1. PERTAMINA SPOKESMAN SAYS INDONESIA WILL INCREASE OIL PRICE NEXT WEEK IN ACCORD WITH OPEC POLICY (REUTER, NYT).

PHILIPPINES

12. MILITARY SOURCES REPORT PHILIPPINE ARMED FORCES ARE ON ALERT ANTICIPATING DEMONSTRATIONS AGAINST MARCOS SUNDAY, DAY HIS PRESIDENTIAL TERM SHOULD HAVE EXPIRED. FILIPINO FREEDOM FIGHTERS ORGANIZATION HAVE THREATENED TO TAKE ACTION IF HE DOES NOT STEP DOWN (AP, NYDN).

13. CARLOS ROMULO AND JAPANESE AMBASSADOR SIGN RATIFICATION PROTOCOL IN CEREMONY ACCOMPANYING SIGNING OF 17 MILLION DOL JAPANESE LOAN TO PHILS. ROMULO DENIES LOAN INFLUENCED RATIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL TREATY, WHICH THE PHILIPPINE CONGRESS DENOUNCED AS JAPANESE "ECONOMIC INVASION" (WP).

THAILAND

14. NARONG SAYS HE PLANS RETURN TO THAILAND AND BECOME BUDDHIST MONK IF HE FAILS IN GAINIG SAYLUM IN EITHER SWITZERLAND OR PORTUGAL (AP, NYDN, NYT, LAT).

15. STUDENTS OF RAMKHAMHAENG UNIVERSITY OCCUPY GOVERNMENT OFFICES DEMANDING PREVIOUSLY-PROMISED ESTABLISHMENT OF SCIENCE DEPARTMENT AT UNIVERSITY. SANYA CABINET WILL TAKE ISSUE UP ON TUESDAY (AP, NYDN, WP).

16. UPON LEAVING FROM FIRST OFFICIAL THAI VISIT TO PRC, DEPUTY FM CHATICHAI TELLS REPORTERS HE MET WITH CHOU "TO PAY MY RESPECTS" AND THAT RTG WILL NOT OPEN LIAISON OFFICES "AT THIS TIME". HE ALSO SAYS "WE TALKED ABOUT TRADE AND HAD AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS" (AFP, NYT).

COMMENT AND ANALYSIS
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17. NYT DEPLORES FACT THAT NO DIRECT WORD HAS YET BEEN RECEIVED CONCERNING FATE OF SOME 20 WAR CORRESPONDENTS AND NEWS PHOTOGRAPHERS STILL MISSING IN SEA. CITING MANHARD CASE, SAYS HOPE REMAINS FOR MISSING NEWSMEN, AND WORLD "MUST NOT ABANDON EFFORTS TO LOCATE T*ESE NONCOMBATANTS" WHOSE SEA SERVICE WAS DIRECTED SOLELY TO KEEPING WORLD PUBLIC INFORMED.

18. WP'S ROSENFIELD TAKES ISSUE WITH "BALONEY", ESPECIALLY PERVERSIVE IN AIR AT THIS SEASON, THAT PEOPLE OF WORLD WANT PEACE. MAINTAINS THAT WHILE ONE SIDE IN VN WAR WANTED "PEACE WITH HONOR" AND THE OTHER SOUGHT CONTROL OF SVN, REAL GOAL OF BOTH IS WHAT MEN HAVE ALWAYS FELT WORTH FIGHTING WARS FOR: POWER.

19. EVANS/NOVAK (WP) SEE LARGE-SCALE NVN DRIVE INTO SVN EARLY NEXT YEAR HINGING ON ARVN'S CONTINUED STEADFASTNESS AND HANOI'S ESTIMATE OF POSSIBLE REACTION BY "WATERATE-WEAKENED" US PRESIDENT. SAY SOME "LEVEL-HEADED" US OFFICIALS BELIEVE THT RATHER THAN WATCHING "HIS 'PEACE WITH HONOR'" IN VN DESTROYED BY COMMUNISTS, PRES. -- "TOTTERING ON THE BRINK OF IMPEACHMENT" -- WILL "PUSH HIMSELF OVER" PRECIPICE BY ORDERING US AIR POWER TO FIGHT OFF NVA ONSLAUGHT.

20. WP CARRIES 6-COLUMN AD OF "THE BLUE ARMY OF OUR LADY FATIMA" THAT ASKS SUPPORT FOR MAKING JAN. 1974 MONTH OF PRAYER FOR PEACE IN VN, IN PREPARATION FOR NEXT YEAR'S TET.

21. NYT'S MARKHAM, AT NA KLANG, SAYS WHILE IT IS

DIFFICULT TO DETECT, THERE IS GENERAL AGREEMENT THAT COMMUNIST-LED INSURGENCY IN VILLAGES OF NE THAILAND IS SPREADING AND BECOMING MORE VIOLENT. CONTENDS GUERRILLAS, ARMED WITH CHINESE-MADE AK-47'S AND US M-16'S, HAVE GRADUALLY STEPPED-UP RAIDS AND AMBUSES, ATTACKING MILITIA UNITS, POLICE OUTPOSTS AND THAI ARMY PATROLS AND CREWS WORKING ON ROADS INTENDED TO SPREAD RTG'S PRESENCE TO REMOTE VILLAGES. FROM POLITICAL STANDPOINT, INSURGENTS' GREATEST SUCCESS HAS BEEN UNCLASSIFIED

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IN DRIVING NUMBER OF LIGHTLY-ARMED MILITIA UNITS FROM VILLAGES THAT OTHERWISE HAVE NO GOVT. REPS, LEAVING THEM OPEN TO PROSELYTIZING. BANGKOK APPARENTLY HOPES TO NEUTRALIZE INSURGENCY IN LONG RUN THROUGH IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH PRC; BUT SOME ANALYSTS DOUBT THIS WILL WORK, IN LIGHT OF CHINA'S SPONSORSHIP OF REBELLIONS ELSEWHERE WHILE MAINTAINING FORMALLY CORRECT DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. AND EVEN IF PEKING SLACKENED GUERRILLA SUPPORT, HANOI MIGHT NOT. JOHN BURNS (TORONTO GLOBE AND MAIL), IN PEKING, FINDS "NOSURPRISE" IN ABSENCE OF CEREMONY THERE FOR MAO'S 80TH BIRTHDAY, SINCE ANY DEPARTURE FROM SIMILAR PRACTICE OF PRIOR YEARS WOULD HAVE BEEN CONTRARY TO CHAIRMAN'S INSTRUCTIONS. HOWEVER, PEOPLE'S DAILY MARKED OCCASION WITH ALLEGORICAL REFERENCE TO SUCCESSION QUESTION, BURNS NOTES, AND HE CITES CHOU, LI TEHASHENG AND CHANG CHUN-CHIAO AS CERTAINLY BELONGING ON ANY "PEKING DIPLOMAT'S VEST POCKET" LIST OF POSSIBLE MAO SUCCESSORS (WP).

22. FROM HK, NYT'S LELYVELD OBSERVES "MODEST PERSONALITY CULT" APPEARS IN MAKING FOR CHEN YUNG-KUEI, "GNARLED PEASANT FROM SHANSI PROVINCE", WHO FIRST CAME TO NOTICE TEN YEARS AGO AS CCP SECRETARY OF TACHAI COMMUNE PRODUCTION BRIGADE, AND IS HE*D UP TO REST OF RURAL CHINA AS MODEL OF SELF-RELIANCE AND POLITICAL FERVOR.

23. IN SPEECH AT INTERUNIVERSITY RESEARCH COLLOQUIUM ON EA, HELD AT GEO. WASH. U INSTITUTE FOR SINO-SOVIET STUDIES, PROF. JUN TSUNODA CITES EXISTENCE OF CHINESE RADICALS STILL FOLLOWING GPCR SPIRIT AND CAUTIONS "TO THAT EXTENT AT LEASE WE MAY NOT BE ABLE TO TAKE" STABILITY OF PRESENT CHOU ADMIN. "MUCH FOR GRANTED, NOT TO SPEAK OF THE TIME WHEN MAO LEAVES THE SCENE" AND CHOU'S FUNCTIONAL CONTROL OF COUNTRY IS DEPRIVED OF PROTECTION FROM MAO'S CHARISMA. ADDS, MOREOVER, THAT IN AT LEAST SOME PROVINCES EFFECTIVE GOVT. IS PROVIDED, NOT BY CHOU ADMIN, OR CCP, BUT BY LOCAL MILITARY REGIONS OR DISTRICTS HEADED BY MILITARY COMMANDERS. SUGGESTS MAO'S DEATH MAY TOUCH OFF NEW PERIOD OF WARLORDS, AND NOTES SOME OF CHOU'S POTENTIAL RIVALS ARE FUNDAMENTAL- LY PRO-SOVIET AND ANTI-US. SEES CURRENT IMAGE OF SINO-

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SOVIET INCOMPATIBILITY HAVING BEEN CREATED "SOMEWHAT ARTIFICIALLY" TO LABEL CHOU'S INTERNAL RIVALS AS PRO-SOVIET TRAITORS, TO JUSTIFY CHOU'S PRO-US POLICY AND TO DEVISE SUITABLE PRETEXT FOR WOOING US BY DISPLAYING ALL-OUT ANTI-SOVIET POSTURE. INSISTS POSSIBILITY OF SINO-SOVIET RAPPROACHEMENT CANNOT BE RULED OUT, THUS QUESTION ARISES WHETHER IT IS POSSIBLE AND SAFE TO DEVELOP US POLICY OF DETENTE WITH CHINA ON BASIC ASSUMPTION OF CHOU REGIME'S STABILITY AND OF CONTINUED DOMESTIC SUPREMACY OF CHINA'S PRO-US FACTION OVER ITS PRO-SOVIET ONE (CSM).

24. SCRIPPS-HOWARD'S STEIF, IN SANA, REPORTS US, CHINA AND SOIET ALL ARE WOOING LITTLE YEMEN ARAB REPUBLIC BECAUSE IT COMMANDS STRAIT OF BAB AL-MANDAB AND CONTROL OF STRAIT WILL DETERMINE WHO CONTROLS OIL FLOW FROM PERSIAN GULF TO WEST WHEN AND IF EGYPT REOPENS AND WIDENS SUEZ CANAL. PRC IS PENETRATING INDIAN OCEAN'S ENTIRE WESTERN SHORE, WITH TANZAM RAILROAD THEIR BIGGEST EFFORT. SAYS FAIRLY COMMON SIGHT IS CHINESE MEDICS IN WHITE SMOCKS RALKING AROUND YAR TENDING TO PEOPLE'S NEEDS. CHINESE BUILT AND STAFFED VOCATIONAL SCHOOL IN SANA, LIVE MODESTLY AND ARE MORE WIDELY ACCEPTED THAN "ABRASIVE" SOVIETS (S-N, DEC. 27).

25. WRITING FROM RAIPEI, LAT'S ELEGANT CITES WAY ROC'S ECONOMY OPERATES "WITH REMARKABLE -- AND SOMETIMES SPECTACULAR -- EFFICIENCY-, MAKING IT EVEN MORE OF "MAJOR EMBARRASSMENT" TO US-PRC RAPPROACHEMENT. NOTES THAT, IN FACT, ROC'S INTERNAL ECONOMY AND WORLDWIDE TRADE HAVE ACTUALLY GROWN MORE RAPIDLY SINCE ITS DIPLOMATIC PROBLEMS BECAME ACUTE IN 1971 (DEC. 23). IN SECOND COLUMN OF SAME DATE, ELEGANT REPORTS THAT IN POLITICAL TERMS, ROC HAS BEEN REDUCED TO "DIPLOMATIC NULLITY", NO LONGER SIGNIFICANT FACTOR ON WORLD SCENE, AND IS "STILL BEING GROUND DOWN--FROM SAND TO FINE POWER-- BY THE INCREASING INTIMACY BETWEEN PEKING AND WASHINGTON". SEES ROC, IN PRACTICE, "TRYING TO SURVIVE ITS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE PREDICAMENT BY A TACIT FLEXIBILITY" WHILE IN PRACTICE HAVING "VIRTUALLY ACCEPTED THE EXISTENCE OF TWO CHINAS" -- A POLICY WHICH TODAY IS OUT OF FAVOR
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IN US, AND ONE PRC WILL NEVER ACCEPT. SAYS ROC'S UNWILLINGNESS TO NEGOTIATE WITH PRC HAS CREATED NEW PREDICAMENT FOR US. THOUGHTFUL MEN ON TAIWAN FEEL THEY COULD TOLERATE FORMAL US RECOGNITION OF PRC OR EVEN ABROGATION OF MST WITH US; WHOLLY UNACCEPTABLE

WOULD BE "AN ACTIVELY INIMICAL AMERICAN POLICY WHICH SEVERELY INJURED TAIWAN ECONOMICALLY" AND PREVENTED SELF-DEFENSE.

26. IN INTERVIEWS BY NYT CORRESPONDENTS OF STUDENTS INVOLVED IN THAI, KOREAN AND GREEK PROTESTS, MARKHAM, IN BANGKOK, QUOTES 22-YEAR-OLD THAT ENGINEERING STUDENT WILRACH SAYING MOST STUDENTS ARE NOW RETURNING TO STUDIES, BUT WOULD RISE AND PROTEST AGAIN IF THEY SEE GRAVE INJUSTICE BEING DONE. BUTTERFIELD, IN SEOUL, REPORTS 20-YEAR-OLD STUDENT, MISS LEE, SAYING STUDENTS DETERMINED TO BRING DEMOCRATIC GOVT. TO SK. LIKE OTHERS, SHE DOES NOT SPECIFICALLY MENTION PARK AND VOICES OPPOSITION TO COMMUNISTS AND NK GOVT.

27. IN SEOUL, WP'S OBERDORFER DISCUSSES IMPOTENCE OF SK PRESS. NOTES SEOUL PAPERS IGNORED STUDENT PROTESTS OF OCT. 2 BECAUSE OF FEAR OF KCIA REPRISAL. SAYS DONG-A ILBO PREPARED STORY, BUT WAS FORCED TO DROP IT. CITES KCIA BEATINGS AND GRILLING OF KOREAN JOURNALISTS, ALL OF WHICH HAD GONE UNREPORTED IN COUNTRY'S PRESS, UNTIL STUDENT PROTESTORS INSPIRED PAPERS TO REPORT UNREST. EMBOLDENED BY LEE HU RAK OUSTER, PRESS HAS BEGUN REPORTING MORE EXTENSIVELY AND CANDIDLY ROK DEMONESTIC POLITICAL FERMENT, EMERGING FROM "ITS DARKEST HOUR IN THE SWAY OF A RUTHLESS TYRANNY WHICH CALLS ITSELF AN INTELLIGENCE AGENCY".

28. BRIAN TOOHEY, IN CANBERRA, SAYS US-AUSTRALIAN RELATIONS HAVE HIT NEW LOW, AND CAUSE IS AGAIN VN. NOTES THAT WEEKEND BEFORE LAST, US LODGED FORMAL PROTEST WITH GOA OVER ALLEGED CAIRNS REMARKS IN HANOI THAT US IS MAINTAINING VN AGGRESSION AND IS URGING GVN TO CONTROL MUCH TERRITORY AS POSSIBLE. TOOHEY NOTES THAT AMB. GREEN REPORTEDLY RAISED CAIRNS MATTER WITH WHITLAM. CNTENDS US ANGER AT TRADE MINISTER'S UNCLASSIFIED

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"FAIRLY PREDICABLE REMARKS" IN HANOI "IS REGARDED IN CANBERRA AS AN UNWARRANTED OVERREACTION. CERTAINLY, PM WHITLAM IS NOT ABOUT TO PUBLICLY RAP (CAIRNS) OVER THE NUCKLES TO APPEASE" US DOS (CSM, DEC. 27).
KSSINGER

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